

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PANAMA 02494 071654Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SAB-02 /058 W
-----080535Z 104193 /14
R 071530Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1413
INFO USCINCSO

S E C R E T PANAMA 2494

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, PN
SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS - NATIONAL GUARD INTEREST

SUMMARY: TWO RECENT INCIDENTS ARE THE FIRST SIGN WE HAVE SEEN
THAT NATIONAL GUARD IS CONSIDERING SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS RELATED
TO TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. THE GUARD'S LONG TORRIJOS-INSPIRED
SEPARATION FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS APPEARS TO BE STARTING TO ERODE.
END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE THE CURRENT CYCLE OF CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS
BEGAN, THE PANAMANIAN NATIONAL GUARD (GN) HAS BEEN KEPT AT A
DISTANCE FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS PROPER. TORRIJOS CLEARLY
DECIDED TO HAVE IT THIS WAY. BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND IN THE
GENERAL STAFF, GN OFFICERS HAVE DISCUSSED US-PANAMA RELATIONS
AND THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENERAL TERMS. BUT THAT HAS BEEN ALL.

2. THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM HAS ALWAYS CONSISTED EX-
CLUSIVELY OF CIVILIANS. EVEN ON DIRECTLY MILITARY QUESTIONS
(E.F. LANDS AND WATERS REQUIREMENTS FOR CANAL DEFENSE) THERE
HAVE BEEN NO MILITARY MEN INVOLVED--AND LITTLE IF ANY
EVIDENCE OF MILITARY INPUT TO GOP NEGOTIATING POSITIONS.
THE CIVILIAN NEGOTIATORS AND THE GN HAVE HITHERTO
APPEARED CONNECTED ONLY AT THE VERY TOP, I.E., TORRIJOS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PANAMA 02494 071654Z

3. HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS THAT THIS DISTANCE BETWEEN
NEGOTIATORS AND GN HAS BEEN DIMINISHING. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN
THE PAST FEW MONTHS, THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM HAS BRIEFED
THE GENERAL STAFF. E.G., PANAMA'S LANDS AND WATERS TECHNICAL
GROUP HAS PRESENTED FULL-SCALE BRIEFINGS. SOME WEEKS AGO,
MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL GROUP TOLD EMBOFF THAT, WITH THE CONSENT

OF TORRIJOS, THEY HAD BEEN MEETING INFORMALLY WITH WORKING-LEVEL GN HEADQUARTERS OFFICERS TO PROVIDE BRIEFINGS AND OBTAIN INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL INPUT.

4. DURING THE PAST WEEK, WE HAVE SEEN TWO INDICATIONS OF INDEPENDENT SUBSTANTIVE GN CONSIDERATION OF TREATY-RELATED ISSUES. MILGROUP ARMY SECTION CHIEF HAS BEEN CONSULTING WITH GN G-3, LTC CONTRERAS AND HIS STAFF REGARDING REORGANIZATION OF G-3 SECTION. HE URGED THAT THE G-3 DEFINE FOR ITSELF WHAT IT ACTUALLY DID, AND WHAT IT EXPECTED TO BE DOING IN THE FUTURE, INCLUDING RESPONSIBILITIES IN CANAL DEFENSE AS ENVISIONED IN THE TACK-KISSINGER DECLARATION. SUCH REFERENCES PREVIOUSLY HAVE DRAWN BLANK STARES FROM GN. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE TOP TWO OFFICERS FROM G-3 SECTION SAID THEY HAD BEEN TASKED BY CONTRERAS TO PREPARE PLANNING DOCUMENTS ON THIS MATTER.

5. IN ADDITION TO CANAL DEFENSE ROLE, HOWEVER, THESE OFFICERS ALSO REFERRED TO THE FOLE, BOTH PRESENT AND PROJECTED, OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS IN CANAL OPERATION. THEY CLEARLY IMPLIED TO ARSECKHIEF THAT THEY WERE THINKING OF GN, AS A COUNTERPART TO CORPS OF ENGINEERS, HAVING SOME ROLE IN CANAL OPERATING ENTITY. DISCUSSIONS OF G-3 REORGANIZATION WILL CONTINUE, BUT WE HAVE COUNSELLED ARSEC CHIEF TO DISCOURAGE GN FROM MAKING ANY PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS BASED ON GN PARTICIPATION IN CANAL OPERATION--AS A DISTINCT FROM ITS DEFENSE--UNDER A NEW TREATY.

6. LATER IN WEEK, MILGROUP WAS ADVISED OF A REQUET TO SOUTHCOM VIA MILITARY POLICE LIAISON CHANNEL (GN G-2
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PANAMA 02494 071654Z

LT NORIEGA TO PROVOST MARSHAL) THAT TWO GN OFFICERS BE ALLOWED TO VISIT TOP OF ANCON HILL. NORIEGA TOLD MILGROUP COMMANDER THAT THE REQUEST HAD EMANATED FROM CONTRERAS' OFFICE. NORIEGA SAID GN UNDERSTOOD LATEST US LANDS AND WATERS POSITION PROVIDED THAT PART OF ANCON HILL, INCLUDING SUMMIT, WOULD REVERT TO PANAMA SUBJECT TO CONTINUED US RIGHT TO USE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AT SUMMIT. TO PERMIT GN TO CONSIDER THIS POSITION, NORIEGA SAID, CONTRERAS DESIRED TO SEND OFFICERS TO OBSERVE JUST HOW MUCH OF SUMMIT WAS ACTUALLY BEING USED AND IN WHAT FASHION. LTC CONTRERAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONTACTED ARSEC CHIEF TO ARRANGE A TOUR OF ANCON HILL AND ITS FACILITIES FOR HIMSELF AND ONE OR TWO GN COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS AFTER THE EASTER HOLIDAYS. HE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED A BRIEFING FOR THE GROUP ON THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES IN USE ON THE HILL. MILGROUP COMMANDER HAS ADVISED SOUTHCOM OF FOREGOING, AND INFORMS US THAT GN REQUEST TO VISIT TOP OF HILL APPEARS REASONABLE AND WILL PROBABLY BE GRANTED.

7. COMMENT: GN DOES NOT HAVE AND HAS NO REASONABLE PROSPECT OF ACQUIRING ANY MEANINGFUL ENGINEER CAPABILITY. NEVERTHELESS, POSSIBILITY OF SOME SORT OF CORPS OF ENGINEERS INVOLVEMENT IN FUTURE CANAL ENTITY HAS EVIDENTLY MIGRATED FROM THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM--WHERE IT HAS CROPPED UP BEFORE--TO WORKING LEVEL AT GN HEADQUARTERS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT REQUEST WAS MADE TO ENABLE GN TO "CONSIDER" THE POSITION. IT IS TOO EARLY TO INTERPRET THE IMPORT--IF ANY--OF THESE EVENTS. THEY COULD BE LITTLE MORE THAN STAFF REACTION TO ACQUISITION OF A LITTLE BASIC INFORMATION. WE DOUBT THAT TORRIJOS HAS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED THE GN TO CONSIDER HOW IT MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN CANAL OPERATION. BUT THESE ACTIONS DO INDICATE THAT THE PREVIOUS DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS AND GN HEADQUARTERS IS SHRINKING.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 PANAMA 02494 071654Z

JORDEN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL GUARD, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, CANALS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PANAMA02494
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770122-0780
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770478/aaaacpnj.tel
Line Count: 140
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 40c0c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2868035
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS - NATIONAL GUARD INTEREST SUMMARY: TWO RECENT INCIDENTS ARE THE FIRST SIGN WE HAVE SEEN THAT NATIONAL GUARD IS CONSIDERING SUBSTANTIVE QUE
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, PN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/40c0c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009